

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, January 4, 1996

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Like the parable of the talents...

Pastor gives members \$10 bills; Lottie Moon reaps rewards

NEW BERN, N.C. (BP) — The \$10 bills a North Carolina pastor gave his congregation in October are now coming back multiplied — all for the cause of Southern Baptists' foreign missions offering.

Pastor Jack Hinton of Tabernacle Church, New Bern, N.C., preached a sermon on the

parable of the talents and then told church members he had a \$10 bill for every member there at least old enough to attend junior high school.

"What good is a sermon if you don't apply it to your life?" Jack Hinton asked.

"This is seed money to be planted on

behalf of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering," he said, challenging Tabernacle members to invest in their own fund-raising projects. The Lottie Moon offering supports roughly half of Southern Baptists' foreign missions effort.

Hinton's plan was to entrust up to \$4,000 from a personal loan to the ingenuity of his members. He asked them to return the seed money, along with profits, on Dec. 17. On that date, the church received \$36,000, an average of \$70 profit per member.

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal for the 450 active church members was \$24,000 — a 2,900% increase from the \$800 they gave in 1982. That was the year Hinton went to Tabernacle — and members began catching his vision for foreign missions.

The pastor's most recent challenge sparked members' imagination. The youth group pooled their money to fund a drive-in on the church parking lot. With '50s music blaring, the kids-turned-carhops strapped on rollerblades and served \$4 hamburger lunches.

Four couples combined their \$10 bills and bought groceries for 13 consecutive Wednesday night suppers, each averaging \$200 in profit. And two enterprising women used their two bills to buy advertising, offering Saturday baby-sitting for Christmas shoppers. Hinton's feeble mother two hours away in Zebulon, N.C., asked for a bill: She is shelling pecans for profit.

Even a visitor from South Carolina took part. The man wrote Hinton a letter saying he took the seed money envelope thinking it contained play money. But when he discovered the money was real, he bought a dilapidated bicycle, put some pedals on it, fixed the flat tires, and sold it for \$25.

One young member, Sean Joll, knew what he wanted to do as soon as Hinton explained the plan: Take \$10 for himself

and \$10 for his brother.

"Where is your brother?" asked church member Diane Hanyo skeptically, as she helped pass out envelopes marked "Seed Money."

"He's in heaven, now," Joll replied.

Joll explained that a car accident claimed his older brother's life before the family moved to North Carolina and joined Tabernacle two years ago. "I just started crying, and I told Sean, 'Son, you can have all the money,'" Hanyo recalled.

Joll, a 15-year-old kid wearing bowl-cut hair and an oversized flannel shirt, nonetheless showed Wall Street savvy. Using both \$10 bills and engaging Hinton for a further investment, he published a Christmas card with a photograph of Tabernacle Church on it. They recouped their expenses and have fewer than 100 cards left to sell — at \$2 apiece — from the printing run of 1,000. They expect about \$1,000 in profit.

"I have always wanted to do something for my brother, but he's in heaven, out of my reach," Joll said. "But I can give \$1,000 to missions in his honor."

If he could see Dwight, Joll would "give him a big hug," he said. "And I'm sure he'd say thanks for what I'm doing for missions." He and his brother had participated together in mission trips with their youth group in Pennsylvania. Tabernacle's interest in mission trips attracted Joll.

Even the printer who published the cards, a United Methodist, stopped by the church office and bought 10 cards. "It seemed like a good cause," said the printer, Steve Jarman. "It really had a purpose to it, and that made it an enjoyable job for us."

He could have kept some cards from production overruns, or he could have simply donated \$20 to the church. "But I wanted to be a part of what Sean and the people at Tabernacle are doing," Jarman told Hinton.



TEEN POWER — Sean Joll, shown here sitting near a photograph of his deceased older brother, responded to a recent challenge from his pastor, Jack Hinton. In October, Hinton urged members of Tabernacle Church in New Bern, N.C., to devise fund-raising projects for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions. Joll's love for missions and memory of his brother motivated him to take seed money Hinton offered and plan a money-making project. Publishing and selling a Christmas card depicting the church, Joll, 15, will clear about \$1,000 for Lottie Moon in honor of his brother. (BP photo by Sandy King)

Welcome!

The first friendly face many international students encounter at the University of Hawaii often belongs to a Southern Baptist. "We always stress, 'We'll help you in any way,'" said Joy Turner, director of international ministries for Oahu Association. Turner characterized the initial greeting to the 2,000 international students who pour into the university each year as "the most crucial meeting" that lays the foundation for ministry to the students. "It's the most crazy time of the year, but it's one of the most exciting times," she said. The association's hard work and consistency in student relations has earned the respect of the school's department of international student services. "School officials know that we totally care about the students first. Part of that is wanting them to know Christ, but what must come first is care for them as an individual person regardless of whether they ever become a Christian or show interest in spiritual things," she said. That doesn't deter Turner's witness, however. "They're going to be key leaders in their country. We're committed that these people are going to go home with the gospel," she said.

Prioritizing

Can harried Christians avoid the pitfalls of today's fast-paced, high-pressure world? The answer is a definite yes, according to North Carolina pastor Joe B. Brown. "You're a spiritual being. If you're physically exhausted and you're emotionally exhausted, chances are you don't take care of yourself spiritually, either," said Brown, who has written the book **Battle Fatigue** to help people prioritize their lives in a complex society. "Battle fatigue is a precursor to 'burnout.' They're probably first cousins. You can recover from battle fatigue a lot quicker than you can from burnout," he explained. Brown, pastor of Hickory Grove Church in Charlotte, was a featured speaker at the 1995 Mississippi Evangelism Conference in Hattiesburg. "We've got a lot of guys who are road warriors. They get up on Monday morning, hit the road, go to the airport, get on a plane, come back on Wednesday, change suitcases, and are out again... Jesus said, 'Love the Lord with all thy heart and all thy mind, and your neighbor as yourself.' It's important to put these two things into effect in your life — having fellowship with God and with your fellow man and reaping the benefits of those relationships," he said.

Looking Back...

10 years ago

The Mississippi Baptist Foundation records its largest gift ever when John Wilbanks, founding member of Kendrick Church, Corinth, and former board chairman of National Bank of Commerce, wills bank stock worth over \$1,000,000 to the Foundation.

20 years ago

Pastor Douglas White leads First Church, Union, in a dedication service marking the completion of an eight-year, \$750,000 building project that includes a new 600-seat sanctuary, fellowship-education building, library, music suite, and pastorum.

50 years ago

Blue Mountain College home economics major Mary Ethel Drane of Natchez is named 4-H Club statewide canning winner and will represent Mississippi at the upcoming National 4-H Club Congress at the Stevens Hotel in Chicago.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

"We regret to inform you..."

I saw the picture again the other day. It was made during the Korean War. In the picture, there are three soldiers sitting on the ground during a lull in the battle. One is writing a letter. The other two apparently had been talking but now one is crying. The other is holding him not unlike a mother would hold a child.

It's all there — the faded uniforms, the rocky terrain covered with scrappy bushes, the young weeping soldier in a fetal position. Tiredness and despair had been the victors on the battlefield that day.

In the same book was a picture of a mother and father sitting on the front-porch. The clapboard house is unpainted. She is in a rocker; he in a straight chair. Both are dressed in their Sunday clothes — but the Sabbath is not the occasion. They had received a

telegram from the War Department: "We regret to inform you that your son...."

They looked uncomfortable. The stiff collar and tie and the photographer invading the privacy of their country life were all strangers. Like the telegram, it had to be endured. Some 57,000 such telegrams were delivered in the Korean War, 1950-1953.

Many Mississippians served in the Armed Forces in the past half century.

There were six boys in my family, and each of us served in the same branch of the service between 1941 and 1954. My parents lived for years fearful of receiving the fateful telegram.

I've walked over the military cemeteries in Pusan, Korea, Manila, and the Punchbowl in Hawaii. So much, so many irretrievably lost. War — declared by the old,

Guy Henderson

Thursday, January 4, 1996



fought by the young — is a dumb way to solve problems.

Now we face another era, another 20,000 troops in Bosnia. Also, we face another potential time of telegrams or phone calls which will read: "We regret to inform you...."

I love my country and if required I would gladly serve again. But Bosnia is a quagmire of religious and cultural intolerance, where for more than a hundred years the people have been unable to solve their own differences.

After a year of American and United Nations' presence in that Eastern European country, there will be casualties. Would that we could all say to our President and our Congress, "Sir, we regret to inform you that it is a poor idea to send U.S. troops to Bosnia."

"New man" says of his own struggle...**Spousal abuse pattern cannot be broken without God's help**

CHAPLIN, Ky. (BP) — Spouse abusers aren't always uncaring, unfeeling people, according to Jim White, who disagrees with the contention of a magazine article he read during his marital separation.

"It said if your husband is abusing you, there is no caring or love," he said. "And I said, 'That's not true.'"

The 41-year-old former carpenter is youth pastor of Chaplin Fork Church. That role starkly contrasts with White's recent life of drug abuse and marital problems.

He read the article on spouse abuse after his wife Sheri filed for a court restraining order against him in March 1994. The action followed 14 years of marriage punctuated by frequent quarrels over insignificant issues such as who would wash the dishes or who left the cap off the toothpaste. When fights erupted, Sheri would "overreact because I was a spoiled brat. When I didn't get my way, I exploded," she said.

Jim struck back, sometimes leaving black eyes or bruises on her and holes in the walls.

When life heaped on the stress of job losses, family deaths, and illnesses, Jim smoked increasing amounts of marijuana, and even popped pills and threatened suicide.

"The only time in life I was happy and content was when I met Sheri. But I couldn't shake my excess baggage. I was an unhappy kid and rebelled against a lot of things."

As often happens with abusers, afterwards Jim felt great remorse. He apologized and promised never to do it again. Yet, like the apostle Paul writes in Romans 7:19, later he found himself doing what he didn't want to do.

Finally, he saw that he had no power to change without God's help. Now, he no longer feels he must "win" every argument to assert his manhood. In fact, he said, it takes more courage to admit when you're wrong.

"Don't harbor resentment or negative feelings," he advised men caught in similar traps.

"Many times I told (Chaplin Fork pastor) Tom (Knight) I was in a war with myself and Sheri was closest to it. If you're not being the husband you need to be, get help. Church is the first place to start. There are books, counselors... help is everywhere."

Sheri said a battered wife plays a role when she doesn't try to change an abusive situation. However, she cautioned, get mad at the real enemy instead of your husband.

"You're fighting the devil. If he can't get at you and your mate,

he'll try to get at your children.

"But I don't read in the Bible where you have to put up with abuse. I got the restraining order out of love. The only way to wake Jim up was to get him out of the house."

The Bible is of help, too. Knight relied on several key Scriptures in counseling Jim and Sheri.

They include the new man described in 2 Corinthians 5:17, the marriage relationship outlined in Ephesians 5:21-33 and Adam and Eve's match, described in Genesis 2:24-25.

"I would hesitate to add to Scripture and call it a marriage ceremony," he said of the latter. "But there are keys to a proper marriage there: leaving, cleaving, permanence, and unity in the relationship. Ideas that Chuck Swindoll uses in (his book) **Family Life**."

The Whites began attending church, and in a spring 1994 revival, each accepted Jesus as Savior. They reunited soon afterwards.

While he was overjoyed to see the Whites back together, Knight said before their relationship could work each of them had to become whole.

While salvation through Christ made that possible, after they reunited they continued counsel-

PRAY FOR THE PASTOR.

"HE'S CAUGHT UP IN HIGH TECH. TODAY HE WANTS A SLIDE PROJECTOR. NEXT IT'LL PROBABLY BE A PHONOGRAPH!"

PASTOR

**THE FRAGMENTS****Overdue!**

It had to happen. People just do not like bills. Eventually some few of them transfer their dislike to the person who brings the bills.

In Dallas, Robby Calhoun, apparently upset over getting bills in his mailbox, stabbed a mail carrier in the back with a steak knife.

Raymond Bell, the postman, was treated at a hospital and released. Police were not certain about the motive; but a detective said, "He didn't like getting bills."

That was not the first time the bearer of bad news was injured. Editors face it quite often: "Quit printing all that bad news. Print

only that which is positive and uplifting." That would suit me if bad news would quit taking place. There is little thrill in sending out news of homosexuality, child abuse, church squabbling, and denominational controversy.

In the Bible we are exposed to unpleasant subjects like incest, adultery, betrayal, church controversy, party-spirit, and even one church member who wanted to have the "pre-eminence among the brethren." Even Peter, the rock, cursed and denied he knew Jesus. Aren't we glad he was forgiven and had a second chance? — GH

1991.

— **Help Yourself: A Revolutionary Alternative Recovery Program** by Joel C. Robertson, Oliver Nelson, 1992.

— **Love for a Lifetime** by James Dobson, Multnomah Press, 1987.

— **Point Man** by Steve Farrar, Multnomah Press, 1990.

— **Pursuit of Intimacy** by David and Teresa Ferguson and Chris and Holly Thurman, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993.

And a video: After You Say 'I Do,' three-tape series including workbook, with H. Norman Wright, Tim and Beverly LaHaye, and Larry Burkett. Produced by Evangelical Films, Garland, Texas. (800) 527-4014.

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Editor
Associate Editor
Editorial Associate
Circulation Manager
Bookkeeper
Layout/Advertising
Proofreader
Editor Emeritus

Guy Henderson
William H. Perkins Jr.
Florence Larrimore
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Top 10 SBC news stories of 1995

National

1. Restructuring of SBC
2. Lottie Moon gift
3. SBC's 150th anniversary
4. Baptism
5. SBC adopts resolution
6. Foreign Missions
7. Texas, Oklahoma
8. SBC adopts resolution affirming
9. Baptist Sunday School Board finds itself in financial report
10. Southern Baptist leader Herschel Hobbs dies in Oklahoma City

Missions

1. Mississippi tops 3 categories nationally
2. State convention approves record giving
3. School prayer halted in Pontotoc
4. Howell W. Todd inaugurated
5. Church Music Department
6. Volunteer mission work
7. Former MC President
8. WMU-sponsored
9. First Church, Jackson, featured on Easter Special
10. Mississippi begins partnership with Venezuela and Colorado

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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Baptist leaders condemn racism, issue call for action

WASHINGTON (BP) — Leaders of the major Baptist conventions in the United States have issued a condemnation of racism and a call for Baptists of all races to work for racial harmony.

In a meeting Dec. 14 at the offices of the Baptist World Alliance, leaders from such groups as the Southern Baptist Convention, American Baptist Churches, USA (ABC), and the predominantly African-American National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., and Progressive National Baptist Convention adopted a statement calling "upon our people to repent of racism, to forgive one another, and to work actively for the eradication of racism from our churches, schools, and society."

The statement included a five-part call to action:

— To take concrete actions that demonstrate the authenticity of our repentance.

— To move beyond polite and politically correct language to engage each other in open and frank discussion about the sins of racism and prejudice in our society and in all levels of our church life.

— To disavow race-based economic and political exploitation and call upon Baptist corporate, business and political leaders to embrace and implement a biblical vision of justice.

— To use the collective influence of Baptist communions to call America to prayer and repentance for the sins of racism and to seek for spiritual healing in the spirit of Jesus the Christ.

— That the leadership of Baptist communions meet again in the next six months in order to develop specific plans for the implementation of the above actions.

The statement also said, "Racism destroys the social fabric of society

and is a cancer which will destroy our society, if we do not act quickly to eliminate it from our churches, schools, and society at large."

Participants described the meeting as historic. BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz said he did not believe such a meeting between black and white national Baptist leaders had occurred even during the civil rights campaign.

Among the 18 participants were

Jim Henry, SBC president; Gary Frost, SBC second vice president; Bennett Smith, Progressive National Baptist Convention president, and G. Elaine Smith, ABC president-elect.

Adoption of the statement followed a 4-1/2-hour meeting in which participants discussed the differing perspectives of both blacks and whites and how racism can be overcome.

HMB's Lewis tells directors: Changing attitudes threaten CP

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — Southern Baptists' cooperative missions funding is threatened more by changing attitudes in local churches and state conventions than by competitive mission causes, said Larry Lewis, Home Mission Board (HMB) president.

Speaking to the HMB board of directors during its Dec. 13 meeting, Lewis praised the year's record giving for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions, but said he is concerned about the Cooperative Program (CP).

"Many have lamented the divisive and competitive efforts of groups like the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and we deeply regret the millions of dollars that have been diverted from the Coopera-

tive Program to fund such competitive causes," Lewis said. "However, an even greater threat to CP comes from... state conventions that have been for some time in a pattern of reducing the funds that go outside their state to SBC causes in order to fund expanded programs and increased personnel within their states."

"An even greater threat than that are local churches which have lost their vision to be part of a world strategy for sharing the gospel," Lewis continued. "The typical Southern Baptist church now gives less than 7% to CP, and it's getting smaller every year even though the needs of the world are constantly expanding."

Lewis challenged board members "to assure your church is a pace-setter in missionary support both in percentage and actual dollar support through CP and the special mission offerings."

In other business the board approved a 1996 budget of \$88.6 million, a \$1.4 million increase over the 1995 budget; restructured three internal divisions; transferred property in Massachusetts to the state convention and in Arizona to a local association; and addressed six motions referred to the HMB by the 1995 Southern Baptist Convention.

Directors also appointed 11 missionaries, elected three new staff members, and honored nine retirees. The chaplains commission endorsed 49 chaplains, bringing the total number of Southern Baptist chaplains to 2,413.

New staff members include Jess Fairbanks, associate director for language church starting; Robert Clayton Vickers, director of military chaplaincy; and **Donoso Escobar**, associate director of church and community ministries. **Escobar currently teaches social work at Mississippi College.**

Born in Nicaragua, he received bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from the University of Arkansas. He was a bivocational pastor in Arkansas for 10 years, and he taught social work at Southern Seminary for 12 years.



Nickels for Lottie

Children from Handsboro Church in Gulfport examine some of the 22,700 nickels (\$1,135) they solicited for the annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions. Culminating the campaign, "End-to-End and Back for Jesus," members of the church's Royal Ambassadors (RA) and Girls in Action (GA) groups placed the coins up and down

the church driveway in a line almost 500 yards long. Local television news featured the kids and their coins Dec. 2. RA and GA leaders David and Linda Groulx said next year they want to challenge area churches to join forces in placing a mile-long line of quarters along the Gulf of Mexico shoreline. (BP photo by Sandy King)

Annuity Board announces Fixed Fund target range

DALLAS (BP) — Officers of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention are projecting a 1996 earnings range for the board's Fixed Fund of 5.00% to 6.25%, approximately the same estimate as the 5.25 to 6.25% for 1995.

John R. Jones, senior vice president for fiduciary services, said, "Interest rates remain uncertain for investment of new contributions and reinvestment of maturing instruments in the Fixed Fund. While prospects for 1995 appear to be toward the upper end of our estimated range, the possibility of falling interest rates causes us to be just a bit more cautious about the possible range in 1996."

The Fixed Fund credited a cumulative 5.58% through November, which was above the 5.15% earnings at the same point in 1994.

Jones said, "Our participants realize the earnings of the Fixed Fund are less volatile than our other investment funds. The years of 1994 and 1995 have

been dramatic illustrations of this fact. In 1994, when both stocks and bonds were suffering losses, the Fixed Fund was comfortably within its estimated range of positive performance. In 1995, stocks and bonds have enjoyed spectacular growth. Meanwhile, the Fixed Fund has returned nice, steady earnings, and it appears the Fixed Fund will end the year with earnings near the upper end of the estimated range."

Participants can change the fund or funds to which contributions are made by notation on their monthly billing form or by calling the Annuity Board's toll-free number: 1-800-262-0511.

Accumulations in funds can be moved once each month by written instructions to the Annuity Board. All changes are made on the first day of the month following receipt of a change order. For information, contact Thomas E. Miller Jr., senior vice president, public relations, Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, (214) 720-4691.

NOBTS makes church music, other course work available

Registration is open for second semester classes offered locally by New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS).

Training is available through several extension center campuses for men and women who are unable to attend classes as full-time students on the main campus in New Orleans.

Master's-level courses are offered on Mondays at the Mississippi College campus in Clinton. Undergraduate courses are offered at Broadmoor Church, Jackson, on Mondays.

NOBTS is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to offer associate, baccalaureate, masters', and doctoral degrees.

Applicants for the master's degree program must be at least age 20 and have an accredited bachelor's degree, including at least 30 hours of liberal arts studies.

Applicants for the undergraduate degree programs must be at least age 25 and have a high school diploma or have passed the GED.

Applicants for all degree programs must have been a Christian for at least one year, have a recommendation from a local church, and have completed and received approval of the application form.

Application fee is \$25. The matriculation fee is \$187.50 for one course taken in a semester. The maximum fee for four or more courses taken in a semester is \$750. Non-Baptist students pay double matriculation. Fees must

be paid at the time of registration.

Second semester classes begin Jan. 22, 1996, at the extension center campuses, and Jan. 23, 1996, on the main campus.

For more information, interested individuals may write the Extension Center Office at New Orleans Seminary, 3939 Gentilly Blvd., New Orleans, LA 70126-4858; or call 1-800-NOBTS-01, ext. 3323.

Students interested in master's-level work may also contact the Clinton Center director, Fuller Saunders, at (601) 957-2670.

Registration is also open for the third of eight courses offered around Mississippi to train bivocational music directors and church educational workers.

The course "Reading Music: Rhythm/Pitch" will meet once weekly from 7-9 p.m. for eight consecutive weeks at three locations in Mississippi: Broadmoor Church, Jackson, beginning Jan. 22; Jimmy McCaleb, teacher; Antioch Church, Columbus, beginning Jan. 23; Ed Nix, teacher; First Church, Purvis, beginning Jan. 22; James Hayes, teacher.

The course is part of a two-year cycle which earns the student a church music certificate from the seminary. Each course costs \$75, and requires no prerequisites. There is also a one-time application fee of \$25. Students interested in these courses or associate-level work may contact the Jackson Center director, Chester Vaughn, at 268 Northpointe Pkwy., Jackson, MS 39211; telephone (601) 956-6285.

Fellowship sends 100th missionary during Alabama appointment service

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) — The four-year-old Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) appointed its 100th missionary in a service Dec. 1.

The Atlanta-based Fellowship, formed in 1991 by moderates unhappy with the direction of the Southern Baptist Convention, named its first missionary, T. Thomas, in 1992. With the appointment of 19 new missionaries at a missions-and-evangelism conference in Birmingham, Ala., the organization's missions force now numbers 100.

"Tonight CBF is about her first work. This is our primary mission," Fellowship Coordinator Cecil Sherman said at the missionary appointment service held at the Beeson Divinity School at Samford University. He noted that 76 cents out of every dollar given to the Fellowship is invested in global missions.

Among the new missionaries are Kent and Erika Parks, who recently resigned after eight years with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, saying they could no longer represent the SBC's conservative leaders with integrity.

The Parks, who have been working with an unreached people group in Asia, will return to Asia to work with a new ethnolinguistic group with 80 million people classified as very difficult to reach with the gospel.

"Am I scared? Yes, I'm scared to death," Kent Parks said. "But I'd rather be thrust through that door with all my fears than to stand at the door and wonder what might have been."

Parks' father, Keith Parks, is the Fellowship's global missions coordinator. Keith Parks was president of the SBC Foreign Mission Board until resigning over disagreements with conservative trustees in 1991. Kent and Erika Parks have two children: Katy, 10, and Lindsay, 7.

Also among the new missionaries

are David and Ana D'Amico, who will be assigned to the United Nations in New York City as part of the Fellowship's International Diplomatic Team.

David D'Amico is a native of Argentina and currently a Billy Graham Professor of Evangelism at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He noted that for much of their career, he and his wife have lived and worked "with the rainbow peoples of the world."

Also appointed were Bob and Dorothy Potts of Columbus, Ga. They will work in pastoral ministry in Kazakhstan. A former member of the Fellowship's Coordinating Council who served on the Global Missions Ministry Group, Bob Potts said at age 62 he felt the call to missions.

The other new missionaries are:

— David and Esther Abney, who will direct the Ross Avenue Center in Dallas. Both are graduates of Southern Seminary. He was born in Macon, Ga., and currently is director of programs and services at New Day, Inc., a non-profit rehabilitation program in Spartanburg, S.C. She, the former Esther Hardee, is a native of Raleigh, N.C. She works as a self-employed pastoral counselor and mental health consultant. They have one son.

— Jonathan and Tina Bailey, who will work two years with an unreached people group in Asia. He is a native of Greenville, S.C., and a 1995 graduate of Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth. She was born in Savannah, Ga., and is a 1994 graduate of Southwestern Seminary who works on campus as an audio-visual assistant and graphic artist.

— Kelly Bilderback of Nashville, who will work with internationals in a two-year assignment at the Arab-American Friendship Center in Dearborn, Mich. A native of Sweetwater, Tenn., and

graduate of Southwestern Seminary, she currently is assistant librarian at the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

— Elizabeth and Steve Johnson of Livonia, Mich., who will work with an unreached people group. Both are graduates of Southern Seminary. He is a native of Frankfort, Mich., and is currently minister of music and education at Livonia Church. She, the former Elizabeth Arnold, was born in Houston, Texas, and has worked as a church planter in Michigan. They have two children.

— Cindy and Les Redfern of Richmond, Va., who will work with an unreached people group. He is a native of Nashville, a graduate of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, and minister at Barboursville (Va.) Church. She, the former Cindy Whitlow, is a native of Richmond and co-owner and president of Pets By Cindy, Inc., in Richmond. They have one son.

— Darrell and Kathy Smith of Dickinson, Texas, who will work as agricultural missionaries with the Albanian people. He, a native of New Iberia, La., currently is an aquatic ecologist. She, the former Katherine Martin, was born in Goldsboro, N.C. She recently taught in a mother's day out program at First Church of Dickinson. They have two children.

— John and Christine Smith, recently Southern Baptist missionary associates in Tanzania. They have been working as volunteers at Open House Ministries in Miami and will continue to work there as Fellowship missionaries. He is native of Magnolia, N.C. She was born in Duplin County, N.C. They have four children.

Fellowship missionaries assigned to unreached people groups often work in areas hostile to a Christian witness. In those cases, it is the organization's policy not to publicly announce the specific people group to which missionaries are assigned.

Merrell named vice president for SBC Executive Committee

NASHVILLE (BP) — William Merrell has been named the new vice president for convention relations for the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

Merrell, 52, succeeds Mark Coppenger as the convention's public relations director. Coppenger became president of Midwestern



Merrell

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Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., in August.

Prior to going to the Christian Life Commission in early 1995 as director of communications, Merrell was director of missions for the Comanche-Cotton Association in Lawton, Okla., 1991-95. He was pastor of seven churches in Texas prior to a nine-year pastorate at Country Estates Church, Midwest City, Okla., 1982-91.



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FMB releases \$10 mil to meet overseas needs

MEMPHIS (BP) — Trustees of the Foreign Mission Board (FMB) addressed urgent missionary needs around the world and accepted another agency's good will offer to assume responsibility for a missionary retirement fund during their regular board meeting Dec. 11-13 in Memphis.

The trustee board also addressed a worrisome decline in giving to Southern Baptist hunger and relief projects overseas and appointed 38 missionaries for service in 20 countries around the world.

The rapid growth of Southern Baptists' worldwide missionary force — now at 4,139 in more than 130 countries — has created an urgent need for missionary housing and automobiles, said John W. White III, assistant vice president for overseas operations. The needs are especially critical in Eastern Europe. Providentially, up to \$10 million to be freed from Hong Kong for global capital needs could help fill this gap.

Trustees also accepted a proposal to transfer to the Annuity Board responsibility for the FMB's pension plan for missionaries appointed

before 1982. That plan promised missionaries a fixed monthly benefit based on years of service, said Carl W. Johnson, FMB vice president for finance, but it required the board to bear the investment risks necessary to guarantee that promised benefit for 3,000 retirees.

In a proposal dated Dec. 1, 1995, the Annuity Board offered to assume the plan's \$24 million liability and an equal amount of investment assets — relieving the FMB of future interest rate funding risks. With the change, missionaries under this plan will be eligible for periodic benefit increases, including a 5% increase Jan. 1, 1996.

Trustees also heard Southern Baptist giving to world hunger and relief has dropped dangerously low at a time when needs and opportunities are greater than ever, said Bill Bullington, vice president for overseas services.

Giving to Foreign Mission Board hunger and relief projects has been steadily declining for several years, and receipts for 1995 are running 15% below last year, Bullington told trustees. The result is only 31 of 45 project requests for 1995 could be funded — and those at only one-half the need.

The 1995 Lottie Moon goal is \$100 million. Trustees have voted to inject anything over \$90 million into "White Harvest" mission efforts in former countries of the Soviet bloc.

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PART-TIME WORSHIP Leader needed in Attala County, at Springdale Baptist Church, located between Kosciusko and West. Send resume to: Personnel Committee, Rt. 2, Box 47, West, MS 39192; (601) 289-6592.

Thursday, January 4, 1996

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 5

Names in the News

Gail Burbeck, pastor of New Garden Church in Northwest Association, died Dec. 20 after a long battle with cancer. Funeral services were held Dec. 22 at Forest Hill South Funeral Home in Memphis. Burbeck was a longtime resident of Olive Branch. He is survived by his wife.

D.L. Callendar of McComb served Holmesville for almost nine years as pastor. He is now retired but is available for supply preaching or as interim pastor. Call (601) 684-3084.

Prentiss Cox, professor and head of the Department of Biology at Mississippi College (MC), was recently named College Science Teacher of the Year by the Mississippi Science Teachers' Association. The award, presented at the group's annual meeting in Biloxi on Nov. 3, recognizes Cox's teaching excellence and dedication to increasing students' awareness of science.

David Miller, MC assistant professor of English, recently published a new book, *The Word Made Flesh Made Word: The Failure and Redemption of Metaphor in Edward Taylor's Christographia*. It deals with God's redemption of an inadequate human language in *Christographia*, a collection of 14 sermons on the nature of Christ by Taylor, a Puritan minister and colonial poet.

NASHVILLE — James V. Cartwright Jr., a retired 23-year employee of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, died of a heart attack Dec. 1, two days before his 64th birthday. Funeral services were Dec. 4 at Nashville's First Church. He is survived by his wife, Virginia; sons, James Kevin of Clarksville, Tenn., David Wayne of Atlanta, Ga., and John Charles of Orlando, Fla., and three grandchildren.

H. Thomas Hight resigned as professor of practical theology at Mid-America Seminary, Memphis, to enter the field of full-time evangelism and Bible conferences. Hight was pastor of West Poplarville Church and First Church, Nicholson, before going to

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teach at Mid-America Seminary.

GREENVILLE, S.C. (ABP) — Don Kirkland, associate editor of South Carolina's *Baptist Courier*, was elected editor by the newspaper's trustees Dec. 15. He will assume his new duties March 1, when the retirement of longtime editor John Roberts takes effect. Kirkland, 52, has been a member of the *Courier's* staff for 21 years, first as assistant editor and since 1983 as associate editor.

Greg Buchanan, harpist, will be in concert at Faith Church, Starkville, on Jan. 12, at 7 p.m. For further information, call the church at (601) 323-9333.

Bryant M. Cummins, 78, former director of the Sunday School Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), died Dec. 27 of cancer at his home in Chesapeake, Va. Funeral services were held Dec. 30 in Portsmouth, Va. The Owingsboro, Ky., native was a former resident of Clinton. He served as MBCB



Jack Maroon was honored recently at First Church, Belmont, for 30 years of service as pastor. First Church presented him with a book of letters and a cash gift in the morning service. The church also had an unveiling of Maroon's favorite scripture, Colossians 1:18, inscribed permanently above the baptistery in his honor. His wife Fae is the associational WMU director.

church architecture consultant, and on the staffs of First Church in Jackson and Brookhaven. He is survived by his wife, Margaret; daughter Ann of Chesapeake, Va.; and son Craig of Meridian.

Just for the Record

Winston Association has started a new Christian counseling ministry. Each Thursday, Cynthia Bratcher of Durant is available for counseling appointments at the Baptist Center in Louisville. She is a graduate of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, holds a master's degree in counseling from Mississippi State University, and has trained with James Dobson of "Focus On The Family."

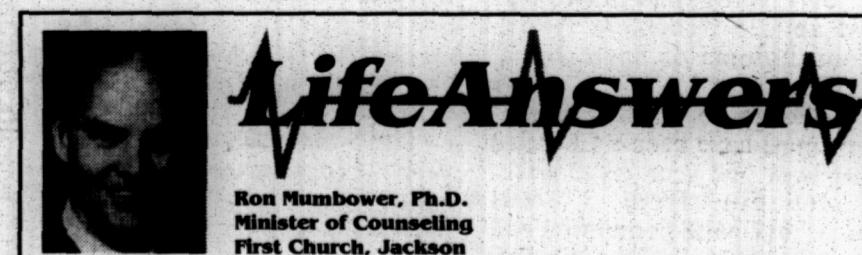
Union Church, Plantersville, was received back into the Lee County Association during the association's fall meeting. Paul Wilson, pastor, has led the church to give to the Cooperative Program and to associational and foreign missions.

The National Woman's Christian Temperance Union is sponsoring a minister's sermon contest. Purpose of the contest is to stimulate biblical preaching in U.S. churches which deals with problems in our society caused by alcohol. A Christian challenge for a solution to the problem must be offered. The sermon must have a biblical text and been preached by the contestant by May 1. A brief

biographical sketch of the minister should include name, address, position in the ministry, education, and other pertinent data. Submit the biography on a separate paper and attach to the front of the sermon. Submit by May 1, 1996, to Mary Ann Freeman, National Christian outreach director, 1527 E. 37th Street, Marion, IN 46953.

Emmanuel Church, Grenada, along with the Woman's Missionary Union of North Central Association, will sponsor a Women's Prayer Challenge conference at the church on Jan. 12-13. The conference will be led by author Jennifer Kennedy Dean. It will begin at 7 p.m. on Jan. 12, and 9:30 a.m. on Jan. 13. Cost is \$20 per person. For more information, call (601) 226-5071 or 226-2869.

The National College Honor Scholarship Society, Alpha Chi, recently awarded William Carey College the Star Chapter Award. The "Star Chapter" designation means that Carey is currently eligible for substantial scholarships offered to other universities such as Pepperdine University and the University of Arkansas.



Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

LifeAnswers will be on holiday hiatus until Jan. 11, 1996. Look for LifeAnswers to reappear in next week's issue.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

Uniform God's servant Redeemer



By David Mitchell
Isaiah 42

Isaiah 42:1-4 introduces the first of four servant songs (possibly five, including Isaiah 61:1-4) in the book. The opinion of most scholars today is that Isaiah is the author of all five. These poems are unique in their presentation of the servant of the Lord. The primary purpose of these passages is to direct attention to the one who was to come and rescue the nation of Israel from its bondage.

God confirms his Servant. In verses 1-4, Isaiah introduces us to the Servant by describing his characteristics, but fails to specify his name. Five or more suggestions have been made as to who the Servant is: the Jewish people, Cyrus, the prophet himself, a collection of prophets, and the Messiah. These servant passages were understood by New Testament writers as prophesying Christ. In addition, the New Testament gives strong evidence that the Messiah is to whom the passages refer. Matthew 7:17-20 puts the whole matter to rest with a direct quote from Isaiah identifying Christ as the one described. The purpose of the introduction of the Servant was to comfort the nation.

Today God's call may come in many different ways. But it surely comes. It came to Samuel as a voice in the night, to Moses in the form of a burning bush, and to Paul in the form of a blinding light. There are some who say God no longer is in the calling business. However, as long as there is ministry to be done, God will call servants.

All Christians have been called to minister, some in full-time Christian service. Others may be called to minister by teaching a Sunday School class or leading a preschool choir. Those who are called to minister can also take comfort in knowing that those whom God calls to serve, he also supports and equips.

Characteristics of the Servant (vv. 2-4). This Servant message would be presented in an unusual manner. He would not be loud or use angry words, but his teaching would be gentle, humble, and mild. He will tenderly care for those who are fragile, broken by sin. The idea is he will not deepen the afflictions of those who are in sorrow. Those with penitent hearts he will affectionately embrace. Again in verse 3b, the same idea carries to the word "wick," which denotes that which is small, thin, or feeble. When the oil in the lamp is almost consumed, he will supply grace as oil to the wick to rekindle the flame. He will bring forth justice and set up true religion. According to his truth and grace he will bring justice for judgment. In verse 4, his purpose is fixed. He will not fail. He will not become in his purposes like the wick or the reed.

We need to understand the servant role in the church as being one not for glory or recognition but to draw attention to the Savior. In studying the Servant's method of tenderly carrying out his mission, we can be encouraged to relate to others with tender compassion.

Comfort in the Servant's covenant (vv. 5-7). God speaks directly to the Servant through his prophetic oracle. Verse 5 confirms God's power and importance for all people. It is the God of verse 5 who calls the Servant to his task. The purpose of the Servant was to represent God's covenant — God's promise to the nations — and bring light into their darkness. It is the same God who created the heavens, spread out the earth, and gives breath to the people on it who will also support those who are his ministers today. God not only calls, but he also empowers. He not only calls and empowers, but he promises to make his servants productive.

God's charge to the people (vv. 8-9). God reminds the people that he is the only true God and will not allow any other to receive his praise. He identifies himself as Jehovah, which means "essential existence." This is the name that separates God from idols. God refuses to allow idols to receive praise for what he has accomplished.

In verse 9 he reminds the nation that the events in verse 5 have taken place as history-past. The events in verses 1-4 and 6-7 will take place as history-future. Because the events God predicted have now been fulfilled, the nation should have ample evidence to confide in him alone. God had proven himself to be God in past acts of history and would do so again through the Servant to come.

Mitchell is pastor of Van Winkle Church, Jackson.

Bible Book

The supremacy of Christ



By Clayton Littlejohn
Colossians 1, 2

Paul began this letter with a typical salutation: he introduced himself, his office (apostle), and the recipients of his letter. His purpose was to encourage the saints in Colossae to allow Christ supremacy in every area of the life. He thanked the Colossian Christians for their faith in Christ and their love for the saints (1:3-8).

The Colossian believers were hearing that Jesus is just one of many emanations of God, and not really God in the flesh, according to the "gnostic" teachers (those in the know). Paul wanted them — and us — to know the truth about Jesus, and how to allow him supremacy in the believer's life.

Paul's prayer for the Colossians: (1:9-14). First Paul prayed that Jesus would have supreme control of the believer's mind (1:9). Notice the pattern: "filled with the knowledge of his will." Paul wanted the saints "in the know" about Christ's perfect will for their lives; which leads to "spiritual wisdom" (how to manifest his perfect will). Why? So the believer would "walk worthy of the Lord" (reflect Christ-like character) (1:10) through bearing fruit. Christ-like fruit comes when Jesus is supreme in the mind, which leads to a Christ-like walk.

When the mind and the actions are right, then one will be "strengthened with his power" (*dynamis*), from which we get our word "dynamite," which gives the believer "steadfastness," (longsuffering) and "patience" (endurance) to manifest Christ in any situation. These are rewarded by all the riches of Christ: "inheritance of the saints in light" (1:12). This inheritance of light frees us from "the domain of darkness" (1:13) — Satan's kingdom — by placing us in Christ's "kingdom of light," through "redemption" (paying the price for something), by forgiving our sin debt (1:14).

The supremacy of Christ (1:15-23a). Paul rebuked the heresy of the gnostics by revealing the truth about Jesus and his relationship to God the Father.

Jesus is "the image," a perfect representation of the "invisible God" (1:15). Jesus is "firstborn of all creation." This title doesn't mean Jesus was created. He wasn't. It means he is preeminent over all creation. Compare this with Exodus 4:22, where Israel is referred to as God's "first-born son." Israel was not the first nation created, but Israel is God's chosen and preeminent nation.

Since Jesus created "all things... thrones, dominions, rulers, and authorities" (1:16-17; John 1:1-3), he ranks above them as their Creator. He is "the head of the body, the church," because he is the first to be raised from the dead; to receive a glorified body, never to die again (1:18; 1 Cor. 15, Rev. 1:18).

As the "fullness" of God (1:19), Jesus is complete in person, nature, and character; he is not an emanation, but God himself in the flesh.

Jesus truly deserves the supreme place in a believer's life because he has reconciled them to God by shedding his precious blood for their sins (1:20). The Colossian believers were once "alienated" — non-participants in the things of God — and "hostile in mind" — at enmity or enemies of God (1:21).

Yet, Jesus gave his life so they might be presented before God, "blameless" (without blemish), and "beyond reproach" (free from accusation) (1:22). This happens by believers continuing in the faith that is "firmly established" (settled) and "steadfast" (solid) "in the hope (evidence) (Heb. 11:1) of the gospel" (1:23A).

Paul wrote that his life was a personal testimony (1:24-29) of the supremacy of Christ in his life, and that he now "struggled" in prayer that the Colossians do the same (2:1-5).

Is Christ supreme in your life? Why don't you write out what it means for Christ to be Lord of your life?

Littlejohn is pastor of Ingram Church, Baldwyn.

Life and Work

Blessed by God



By Linda Donnell
Matthew 5

What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ? It goes far beyond just walking the aisle and announcing, "I am a Christian." Jesus' words encouraged a life very unlike the powerful religious figures of that day. This unit based on the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5) challenges us to discover what true righteousness and "kingdom living" are all about.

Jesus teaches his disciples (vv. 1-2). The end of the preceding chapter (Matt. 4) tells of the many miraculous cures done by Christ in Galilee. As the fame of these miracles brought together a huge crowd, Jesus seized the opportunity to teach his newly-chosen disciples (and the mass of people around them). How often do we see opportunities and seize the moment to teach others about Christ and his love?

Jesus immediately captured the crowd's attention with his first words: "Blessed are...." The term "blessed" meant "divine joy and perfect happiness," and the people naturally were eager to know the source of this happiness, as even we might be today.

God blesses his needy people (vv. 3-6). It becomes immediately clear in reading these verses that members of God's kingdom must possess an inner attitude of need. The phrase "poor in spirit" (v. 3) describes one who is aware of his need for God's love and mercy and is completely willing to give up self. Likewise, those who "mourn" (v. 4) hurt for the evil and injustice in the world and feel a strong need for God's help and comfort.

Verse 5 describes kingdom people as "meek." The world might view these as weak and spineless individuals who are pushed around. But meekness refers to the ability to submit to God and his instructions.

The fourth inner attitude of kingdom people is their intense desire to seek God's will for their lives and to always look for God's perspective. Jesus described this as a "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (v. 6).

Who would think of the needy as happy? Yet, Jesus pronounced his happiness for the disciples who come before him with these attitudes of need. If you think about it, one cannot pour water into a full bucket. Only after you pour out its contents can you refill it. In the same way, God can only fill us with his blessings if we empty our inner being of self and its selfish attitudes.

God blesses his servant people (vv. 7-10). While the first four Beatitudes deal with the disciples' relationships with God, the last four deal with the implications of this relationship on their interactions with others. Jesus taught that the disciples of God will show compassion toward others (v. 7), will show sincerity and integrity in the world around them (v. 8), and will participate in a ministry of reconciliation (v. 9). As these servant attitudes are exhibited, God promised his blessings.

God blesses his persecuted people (vv. 10-12). Jesus did not teach that his disciples should seek out persecution, but rather that those who live the "kingdom life" would likely meet with conflict and face persecution from those around them (vv. 10-11). But even in persecution, his followers could rejoice (v. 12). They could be assured in knowing that God is in control and will win in the end (1 Peter 5:10).

Have you found the true happiness promised by God to his disciples? How have you experienced the "blessings" of each of the Beatitudes?

Donnell is a member of First Church, Hattiesburg.

THE VILLAGE VIEW

The Baptist Children's Village



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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of *The Village View* is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

OCT. 1, 1995-
OCT. 31, 1995

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capsules

DCBC VOTES TO INCREASE CP GIVING TO 29%: VIENNA, Va. (BP) — Messengers to the 119th annual session of the District of Columbia Convention (DCBC) unanimously voted to raise the Cooperative Program portion shared with the Southern Baptist Convention from 27% to 29%. Convention leaders hailed upward movement in total missions giving. They pointed out that, despite the organization's continued budget struggles, this increase stands out in contrast to the decrease among larger conventions. The DCBC has set a long range goal that calls for steady increase in missions giving beyond the convention's expenses with a goal of 40% by the year 2000. This commitment, in terms of finances and sacrificial service, represents another way the covenanting churches will "Seek the Peace of the City," this year's overall theme for the November meeting at Vienna Church. Jere Allen, executive director/minister, and other speakers, urged all DCBC Baptists to enmesh themselves in the life of metropolitan Washington. The convention has made a conscious shift in focus to becoming an energy field that enables the work of individual churches, he said.

PREFERRED RISK PRODUCES VIDEO TO WARN TEENS: WEST DES MOINES, IA — "We are a family fighting drug and alcohol abuse. This video is an important new tool in that battle," said David Poe, vice president and executive producer of "The Bottle," the company's newest video to help stop teens from drinking and driving. Preferred Risk Mutual, a member of Preferred Risk Financial, Inc., was founded in 1947 by nondrinkers, for nondrinkers. Part of its corporate mission is battling drug and alcohol abuse. It helps support Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Students Against Driving Drunk, and other similar groups. "The Bottle," a 15-minute color video, was filmed in local high schools and follows one day in the life of a vodka bottle — showing the lives it destroys.

VINEYARD ASSOCIATION KICKS OUT TORONTO CHURCH: ANAHEIM, Calif. (ABP) — The Toronto church which attracted world attention with its so-called "laughing revival" has been kicked out of the Association of Vineyard Churches for its emphasis on "exotic" phenomena. The Toronto Airport Vineyard claims 600,000 people have attended a revival which broke out in the church in January 1994, including 20,000 Christian leaders and 200,000 visitors from virtually every country and denomination. The revival has become controversial, even in the Vineyard Association, over reports of worshipers becoming "drunk" in the Spirit, laughing uncontrollably, or, in some cases, roaring like lions. The phenomenon has been carried to churches scattered worldwide, and even was blamed as a factor in the recent firing of a Southern Baptist missionary in Singapore. Recently the Vineyard association, based in Anaheim, Calif., expelled the Toronto congregation, saying it had moved beyond the association's view that the purpose of renewal is to equip, train, and release people. The Toronto Vineyard has crossed a line, putting more emphasis on "being touched by the Holy Spirit" than on equipping, which is treated as "incidental or non-existent," association leaders wrote in a Dec. 8 letter to Vineyard pastors.

INTERCEDE FOR CUBA'S BAPTISTS, SAY RETIRED FMB MISSIONARIES: HAVANA (BP) — Cuban Baptists' greatest need is for the prayers of their Baptist brethren in the United States. That's the impression brought back by retired Foreign Mission Board missionaries Charles and Jean Allen of Wilmington, N.C., who spent 15 days in the island nation, invited by the Western Baptist Convention Seminary in Havana. Every church the Allens attended was full. "There is a real spiritual renewal in Cuba," Charles Allen said. About 12,000 members worship in the 136 churches of the Western convention, related to century-old Southern Baptist mission work. During the last three years the convention has expanded by 21 churches. But rapid growth has left a shortage of pastors — 51 shy of the number of churches. "I think the biggest need they have is prayer," said Allen. "They need prayer for pastors."

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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This week's clue: O equals D.

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Five: Twenty.

Hondurans line up for assistance with physical and spiritual needs

By Janice Hudson

The sea of eager faces with plaintive brown eyes that greeted us in the dusky twilight upon our arrival at LaVenta, Honduras, on that Sunday evening made the long, tiring trip seem worthwhile.

This is why we were there! How long had they been waiting?

With darkness rapidly descending and only a generator to provide intermittent lights, we quickly set up camp, ate our supper, and held a brief worship service.

Although we had tried to absorb the magnificent mountain scenery as we traveled more than six hours from the capital city of Tegucigalpa, we could not fully appreciate the beauty of LaVenta until the break of day on Monday.

Only then did we fully realize that we were nestled in a little flatlands valley in the midst of majestic mountain peaks. Contrasting shades of green grass and trees were punctuated by vertical cornfields up the sides of the steep mountains.

Banana and plantain groves, and coffee plants were growing in the shade of the taller tropical trees — all thriving on the rich dark soil of LaVenta.

In the midst of all this splendor of creation, the small adobe homes with sparse or no furnishings seemed even more primitive. Unfenced horses, oxen, burrows, dogs, and chickens roamed freely.

A stark gray concrete block church sat in the center of a field awaiting addition of the roof, another part of our mission there.

Worship services were held in a stable which had been constructed of tree limbs and a thatched roof with crude benches providing limited seating. Curiosity seekers, as well as worshipers, gathered to see what these North American "gringos" were doing.

Hungry insects radiated around the sparse lights provided by our generator. Odors common to a stable were sometimes apparent.

Could this resemble the setting in which our Lord was born?

When we awoke early on Monday morning, long lines of people were already waiting in the hot sun to register for the free medical and dental services we came to provide.

How far had they walked to be there?

The interpreters we picked up in the capital city assisted the doctors and nurses as they ministered to the physical needs of 1,844 patients during those three days in the field.

The language barrier presented some problems in arriving at a proper diagnosis and prescribing needed medication, but we soon learned that a touch and a smile meant the same in any language.

There were 5,814 prescriptions filled by the pharmacy and 275 eyeglasses fitted, allowing us to meet some of the physical needs.

In our dental clinic, our two dentists, along with a Honduran

Ralph White.

All week we had been keenly aware of the language and cultural barriers separating us from the people of LaVenta, but as we joined hands for the final song that night, the common bond of the love of Jesus Christ was more evident than any differences.

Boxes of school supplies were presented to the teacher of the school which had served as our temporary home.

Through an interpreter, she expressed her gratitude to Parker Memorial Church in Anniston, Ala., for providing these educational tools for the children of LaVenta.

A week of ministry was ending. We had done a lot in a short period of time.

Was it enough?

There were so many needs in which our accomplishments seemed to barely make a dent, but as missionary Russell Patterson reminded us, "seeds" are what we're all about.

We plant the seed, the harvest belongs to God.

The people of LaVenta gave us a special gift, also.

Through their lives of quiet contentment, we learned that people who have very little materially can be happy and productive by creatively using whatever resources they have to the fullest.

Can you and I learn to do the same?

For more information on the Mississippi partnership projects, contact Bill Hardy, partnership coordinator for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

Hudson is a member of Parker Memorial Church in Anniston, Ala., which has made several mission trips under the sponsorship of the Mississippi/Honduras Partnership.

Baptist Record
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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY
901 COMMERCE ST. SUITE 401
NASHVILLE TN 37203
Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205
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